

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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PM-05 SP-02 SS-15 INR-07 INRE-00 CIAE-00 ARA-10
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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4299

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 NAIROBI 0883

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, ET, SO, US

SUBJECT: TOWARDS PEACE IN THE HORN

REF: A) STATE 006298; B) STATE 011011

1. THE FOLLOWING THOUGHTS EMERGED FROM DISCUSSIONS HELD
HANAURY 17 BETWEEN JOHN LOUGHRAN AND MYSELF, ASSISTED BY
MEMBERS OF EMBASSY STAFF. WE DON'T THINK WE HAVE EXHAUSTED
THE SUBJECT BY ANY MEANS, BUT HOPE THAT SOME OF THESE IDEAS
MAY PROVE USEFUL TO THOSE CURRENTLY PLANNING US (AND ALLIED)
POLICY OPTIONS IN HORN.

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2. IT IS IN THE ALLIED INTEREST THAT THE FIGHTING IN HORN
CEASE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. FOR THE LONGER THE FIGHTING
CONTINUES THE GREATER THE OPPORTUNITY THE SOVIETS WILL HAVE
TO EXPLOIT THE SITUATION TO THEIR ADVANTAGE. THUS, WHILE OUR
ACTIONS MUST BE JUDICIOUS AND WELL TIMED, WE SHOULD CONTINUE
WITH OUR DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS AIMED AT A MILITARY DISENGAGEMENT
AND A NEGOTIATED PEACE.

3. IF THEY ARE TO ENJOY ANY CHANCE OF SUCCESS, OUR EFFORTS TO BRING THE CONTENDING PARTIES TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE MUST BE ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES. THEREFORE, OUR ACTION MUST BE SEEN AS EVEN-HANDED AND (CONVINCINGLY) REFLECT A DESIRE TO SEE AN EQUITABLE PEACE ESTABLISHED IN THE HORN. IF IT APPEARS THAT WE ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN CONTAINING SOVIET INFLUENCE, THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO OBTAIN ETHIOPIAN COOPERATION.

4. IN ORDER TO PROJECT THE NECESSARY IMAGE OF EVEN-HANDEDNESS, WE THINK THAT WE AND OUR ALLIES WILL HAVE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE CURRENT SITUATION IN THE HORN HAS ARISEN AS A RESULT OF THE INITIATION OF HOSTILITIES BY SOMALI LIBERATION FORCES SUPPORTED--IF NOT CONTROLLED BY--THE SOMALI NATIONAL ARMED FORECES AGAINST THE FORCES OF THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT. WE WILL NOT BE BELIEVABLE IF WE CONTINUE TO IMPLY THAT THE SITUATION IN THE HORN IS SOLELY THE RESULT OF SOVIET "INTERFERENCE." AND OUR OWN 31-YEAR MILITARY INVOLVEMENT IN ETHIOPIA CANNOT BE IGNORED COMPLETELY. HAD THE SOMALIS NOT STARTED THE FIGHT, THE SOVIETS WOULD NOT NOW BE IN A POSITION OF APPEARING AS ETHIOPIA'S SAVIOR. ONE PROBLEM THAT HAS OBVIOUSLY HAMPERED OUR SEARCH FOR AN EFFECTIVE POLICY ON THE HORN HAS BEEN A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF CONFUSION AND AMBIGUITY ON THIS ISSUE. CERTAINLY A BASIC ASSUMPTION OF THESE OBSERVATIONS IS THAT WE SHOULD UNEQUIVOCALLY ACCEPT AND RECOGNIZE ETHIOPIAN SOVEREIGNTY
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OVER THE OGADEN, WITH THE EXPLICIT UNDERSTANDING THAT SUBSEQUENT NEGOTIATIONS TO ESTABLISH A DEFINITIVE BOUNDARY MAY ALTER THE AREAS UNDER THE SOVEREIGNTY OF EACH NATION TO SOME DEGREE.

5. BY THE SAME TOKEN, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT EITHER MOSCOW OR ADDIS ABABA WOULD BE RECEPTIVE TO PLEAS FOR SOVIET RESTRAINT IN THE HORN UNLESS AT THE SAME TIME WE ATTEMPTED TO CONVINCE THE ARAB STATES TO CURTAIL THEIR FINANCIAL AND MORAL SUPPORT OF THE SOMALI WAR EFFORT. IN PARTICULAR WE SHOULD INSIST THAT ANY MILITARY DETACHMENTS FROM COUNTRIES FRIENDLY TO SOMALIA BE KEPT WITHIN SOMALIA'S BOUNDARIES AS DEFINED PRIOR TO THE OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES. AS I HAVE ALREADY OBSERVED, I BELIEVE THE INTRODUCTION OF EGYPTIAN AND SUDANESE TROOPS IN SOMALIA WILL ONLY FURTHER COMPLICATE THE ISSUES IN THE HORN AND COULD ULTIMATELY PROVOKE THE NOT SO DORMANT ARAB-AFRICAN ENMITIES ON THE BROADER LEVEL OF INTER-AFRICAN POLITICS.

6. IN ATTEMPTING TO STIMULATE THE PROCESS OF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT, WE MUST NOT ONLY PUSH FOR THE PROCESS OF NEGOTIATIONS BUT ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR SUBSTANCE. MOREOVER, OUR EFFORTS MUST BE CONSONANT WITH THE OAU PRINCIPLE OF THE

TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF ITS MEMBERS. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT A FINAL SETTLEMENT MAY NOT INVOLVE SOME CHANGES IN THE ETHIOPIAN-SOMALI BORDER, WHICH JURIDICALLY REMAINS PROVISIONAL, HAVING NEVER BEEN AGREED TO BY THE TWO COUNTRIES. BUT ANY SUCH CHANGES MUST BE SEEN BY THE REST OF THE AFRICAN STATES AS THE RESULT OF THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS, NOT AS THE PRODUCT OF SOMALI CONQUEST.

7. IT SEEMS TO US THAT THERE ARE TWO SEPARATE ISSUES AT STAKE:
(A) THE DEFINITION OF THE BORDER AND
(B) THE POLITICAL FATE OF THE OGADENI POPULATION
THESE ISSUES TEND TO GET CONFUSED, BUT THEY ARE NOT THE SAME.
THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A BORDER DEFINITION ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH COUNTRIES. THE ISSUE HAS BEEN DEBATED SINCE BEFORE THE TURN
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OF THE CENTURY, AND WAS NOT RESOLVED AT THE TIME OF SOMALI INDEPENDENCE. CONSEQUENTLY, TO ALTER THE LINE FROM THE "PROVISIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE BOUNDARY" WOULD NOT BE TO VIOLATE ETHIOPIA'S TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY. SINCE NONE OF THE LOCATIONS EVER PROPOSED FOR THE BORDER HAVE INCLUDED ALL OF THE OGADEN OR ENCOMPASSED ALL OF THE ETHNIC SOMALIS IN ETHIOPIA, THE FATE OF THESE PEOPLE IS CLEARLY A SEPARATE ISSUE AND ONE THAT WILL HAVE TO BE RESOLVED IN ANY SETTLEMENT ACCEPTABLE TO MOGADISCIO. THE ISSUE OF THE OGADEN SOMALIS WILL OBVIOUSLY BE THE MOST DIFFICULT TO RESOLVE AND THE MOST URGENT. A REDEFINITION OF THE BORDER WOULD PROBABLY NOT INVOLVE THE TRANSFER OF ENOUGH TERRITORY TO WORRY THE EPMG EXCESSIVELY, IF BY REACHING AN AGREEMENT ETHIOPIA CAN BE ASSURED OF SOMALIA QUIESCENCE FOR THE FORSEEABLE FUTURE.

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AMEMBASSY ROME

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8. THE MAJOR HURDLE TO BE OVERSOME IN THIS WHOLE PROCESS WILL CLEARLY BE THAT OF CONVINCING BOTH SIDES THAT A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT IS PREFERABLE TO CONTINUED FIGHTING. IT IS UNLIKELY, HOWEVER, THAT EITHERSIAD BARRE OR MENGISTU WILL BE MOVED TO COMPROMISE AS LONG AS EITHER BELIEVES THAT VICTORY ON THE BATTLEFIELD IS POSSIBLE. IF THESE CONSLUSIONS ARE CORRECT, IT WILL BE VITALLY IMPORTANT THAT EICH SIDE'S ALLIES AND ARMS SUPPLIERS COOPERATE TO THE POINT OF URGING THEIR CLIENT TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE AND REDUCING THE ARMS FLOW SUFFICIENTLY THAT THE PARTIES WILL GRASP THE DIFFICULTIES OF CONTINUING THE HOSTILITIES. THIS WILL NECESSITATE, AS INDICATED ABOVE, RENEWED DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS WITH THE SOVIETS TOGETHER WITH CONCURRENT APPROACHES TO IRAN, SAUDI ARABIA, AND OTHER SOMALI
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BACKERS. WITHOUT THE COOPERATION AND RESTRAINT OF THE MAJOR BACKERS OF EACH SIDE WE SEE NO HOPE AT ALL THAT AN EARLY NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WILL BE POSSIBLE.

9. SINCE THERE IS NO PROSPECT THAT ETHIOIA, ARMED, ENCADRED, TRAINED, AND PERHAPS ASSISTED ON THE BATTLEFIELD BY THE SOVIETS AND THEIR CUBAN ALLIES, WOULD EVER AGREE TO THE NEGOTIATED LOSS OF ANY SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF TERRITORY IN THE OGADEN, THE MOST REALISTIC OBJECTIVE FOR WHICH MOGADISCIO MIGHT PRESS IN AID OF ITS ETHNIC KIN WOULD BE SOME SORT OF REGIONAL AUTONOMY. AS EMBASSY ADDIS ABABA HAS POINTED OUT (0190) THE EPMG PHILOSOPY PROVIDES FOR REGIONAL AUTONOMY AND IT SEEMS REASONABLE TO ASSUME, CONSIDERING ALL ITS OTHER PROBLEMS, THE EPMG MIGHT AGREE TO OGADEN AUTONOMY IN RETURN FOR A CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES.

10. OBVIOUSLY, THIS SOLUTION WOULD BE FAR SHORT OF THE "SELF-DETERMINATION" FOR WHICH, ACCORDING TO THE SOMALI VERSION

OF THE STORY, THE WESTERN SOMALI LIBERATION FRONT IN THE ABO FRONT HAVE BEEN FIGHTING. IT WOULD PROBABLY BE A MAJOR DIPLOMATIC EFFORT TO CONVINCE SIAD BARRE THAT THIS WAS THE BEST HE COULD HOPE TO GET.

11. EVEN IF THE ELEMENTS OF COMPROMISE WERE ACCEPTABLE TO THE TWO PARTIES, THERE WOULD BE FURTHER DIFFICULTIES WITH THE MODALITIES OF DISENGAGEMENT. BEFORE THE SOMALI NATIONAL ARMY TROOPS AND EQUIPMENT WERE WITHDRAWN ACROSS THE BORDER AND THE LIBERATION FRONT LAID DOWN THEIR ARMS, THEY WOULD HAVE TO HAVE SOME SORT OF GUARANTEE THAT, ONCE DISARMED, THEY WOULD BE SAFE FROM REPRISALS FROM THE ETHIOPIANS. WE THINK THAT IT WOULD PROBABLY BE NECESSARY FOR THE THIRD DIVISION TO BE WITHDRAWN FROM THE OGADEN, AND IT WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY HELP IF OAU OBSERVERS WERE BROUGHT TO THE SCENE TO ENSURE THAT THE
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TERMS OF THE ARMISTICE WERE HONORED.

12. IN ORDER TO MAKE SUCH A SOLUTION PALATABLE TO THE ETHIOPIANS AND THE SOMALIS, WE SUGGEST THE FORMATION OF A WESTERN CONSORTIUS TO PROVIDE RECONSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE TO BOTH COUNTRIES. SUCH AN AID PROGRAM WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO HAVE AT LEAST THE TACIT BLESSING OF THE SOVIETS.

13. CLEARLY, THE CONTINUING SHIFT IN THE MILITARY EQUILIBRIUM TOWARD ETHIOPIA WILL MAKE A COMPROMISE SETTLEMENT DIFFICULT. IF THE FIGHTING CONTINUES, WE THINK WE MUST REALISTICALLY EXPECT AN ETHIOPIAN VICTORY. ETHIOPIA IS NUMERICALLY FAR SUPERIOR TO SOMALIA, AND THERE SEEMS NO WAY THAT THE SOMALIS CAN FIND SOURCES OF MILITARY SUPPLY THAT WILL BE ABLE TO MATCH THE SOVIET ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IN ETHIOPIA. IF OUR EFFORTS TO PROMOTE A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT FAIL, THERE WILL BE LITTLE WE CAN DO TO INFLUENCE THE OUTCOME OF THE CONTEST. IF, HOWEVER, WE HAVE MAINTAINED AN APPEARANCE OF STRICT NEUTRALITY BETWEEN THE CONTESTANTS, WE CAN AVOID IDENTIFICATION WITH THE LOSER. A SOMALI DEFEAT DOES NOT HAVE TO BE SEEN AS A US OR A WESTERN DEFEAT. AFTER ALL, SOMALIA ONLY TURNED TO THE WEST AFTER THE SOVIETS HAD REFUSED FURTHER ASSISTANCE. THE SOMALI MILITARY MACHINE WAS A SOVIET CREATION, AND THE WEST NEED NOT INVOLVE ITS OWN PRESTIGE IN A VAIN ATTEMPT TO PRESERVE SIAD BARRE FROM THE RESULT OF HIS OWN FOLLY.

14. WHILE WE ARE NO BETTER ABLE THAN ANYONE ELSE TO PREDICT THE FUTURE OF EVENTS IN ETHIOPIA, EXPERIENCE OVER THE PAST TWO DECADES LEADS US TO BELIEVE THAT SOVIET GAINS IN THE HORN MAY BE MORE APPARENT THAN REAL. THROUGHOUT AFRICA THE SOVIETS HAVE SHOWN VERY LITTLE STAYING POWER (E.G., THEY HAVE LOST IN EGYPT, THE SUDAN, AND SOMALIA DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS), SO WE BELIEVE THAT, GIVEN THE SOVIETS' WELL DEMONSTRATED

INEPTITUDE IN AFRICA, THEY WILL, IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER,
MANAGE BEFORE TOO LONG TO ALIENATE THEIR NEW FOUND ETHIOPIAN
FRIENDS.

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15. IN ADDITION, THEIR SUPPORT OF ETHIOPIA WILL CONTINUE TO
BRING THE SOVIETS MORE AND MORE INTO CONFLICT WITH MAJORITY
OF ARAB STATES, UNDERMINING THE SOVIET POSITION IN THE MIDDLE
EAST, PERHAPS THEREBY FACILITATING PROGRESS TOWARD A RESOLUTION
OF THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT.

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